MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA SUBREGION: THREATS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

BY

COLONEL BAMIDELE MATTHEW SHAFA
Nigerian Army

USAWC CLASS OF 2011

U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 16-03-2011	2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Subregion: Threats, Challenges and Solutions		**5a. CONTRACT NUMBER**
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Bamidele Matthew Shafa		**5d. PROJECT NUMBER**
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Thomas Sheperd Department of National Security and Strategy		**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013		**10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)**
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Only a work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright. The author is not an employee of the United States Government. Consequently, this document may be protected by copyright.

14. ABSTRACT

Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is a function of the region's diverse natural resources, the vulnerabilities inherent in its geographical location as well as environmental and demographic factors. Poaching, piracy, transnational crime, boundary disputes and environmental degradation are common threats to security of the Gulf. Although some steps were taken by international and regional stakeholders to address the threats, inherent challenges such as uncoordinated international and regional initiatives, lack of situational awareness and response capabilities and lack of robust legislative and judicial arrangements militated against the expected successes. To combat threats to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, international community and regional authorities would have to adopt an integrated demand-based approach to identify, prioritize and resource requirements to empower Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, an existing regional maritime security structure, to deal with the threats. This approach will promote unity of efforts and address the needs of the stakeholders.

15. SUBJECT TERMS African Union, African Integrated Maritime Strategy, African Partnership Station, African Maritime Law Enforcement Program, European Union, Excess Defence Assets, Exclusive Economic Zone, Food and Agriculture Organization, Gulf of Guinea Commission, Gulf of Guinea Guard, Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy, International Maritime Bureau, International Maritime Organization, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta, Marine Pollution, Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, Subregional Integrated Coast Guard Network, United Nations, United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea, United States African Command.

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFED	**b. ABSTRACT** UNCLASSIFED	**c. THIS PAGE** UNCLASSIFED	UNLIMITED	32	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*

MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA SUBREGION: THREATS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

by

Colonel Bamidele Matthew Shafa
Nigerian Army

Colonel Thomas Sheperd
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Bamidele Matthew Shafa

TITLE: Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Subregion: Threats, Challenges and Solutions

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 16 March 2011 WORD COUNT: 6,031 PAGES: 32

KEY TERMS: African Union, African Integrated Maritime Strategy, African Partnership Station, African Maritime Law Enforcement Program, European Union, Excess Defence Assets, Exclusive Economic Zone, Food and Agriculture Organization, Gulf of Guinea Commission, Gulf of Guinea Guard, Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy, International Maritime Bureau, International Maritime Organization, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta, Marine Pollution, Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, Subregional Integrated Coast Guard Network, United Nations, United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea, United States African Command.

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is a function of the region's diverse natural resources, the vulnerabilities inherent in its geographical location as well as environmental and demographic factors. Poaching, piracy, transnational crime, boundary disputes and environmental degradation are common threats to security of the Gulf. Although some steps were taken by international and regional stakeholders to address the threats, inherent challenges such as uncoordinated international and regional initiatives, lack of situational awareness and response capabilities and lack of robust legislative and judicial arrangements militated against the expected successes. To combat threats to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, international community and regional authorities would have to adopt an integrated demand-based approach to

identify, prioritize and resource requirements to empower Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, an existing regional maritime security structure, to deal with the threats. This approach will promote unity of efforts and address the needs of the stakeholders.

MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA SUBREGION:
THREATS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The maritime domain is the lifeblood of any country and indeed any continent.[1]

Apart from being the provider of trade routes, this domain provides food, commodities,

income from tourism and even moderates the climate. This potential has made the

issue of maritime security a subject of serious concern to states, international

organizations and other stakeholders in the maritime domain. Insecurity of the maritime

domain is not new to Africa. For instance, the Barbary Coast in North Africa (Algeria,

Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) was a notorious area for piracy between the 17th and 19th

Centuries.[2] Also, in recent times, Africa has featured prominently in the global map of

violence at sea. Events off the Horn of Africa and off the West African Coastline; the

Gulf of Guinea (GoG), continue to draw international attention due to, among other

things, a steep rise in maritime threats, in particular the daring raids on ships by pirates.

There are two major developments of maritime insecurity in Africa. First is the

concentration of maritime threats, including piracy, in three main regions: the Somali

Coast and Gulf of Aden along the East African Coast, Nigerian territorial waters in West

Africa, and the Mozambique Channel/Cape Sea route in Southern Africa. Second is the

increase in the frequency and sophistication of maritime threats within the continent.[3]

According to International Maritime Bureau (IMB), there were 445 pirate attacks in 2010,

a 10 percent rise from 2009.[4] Also, maritime piracy cost the global economy between $

7 billion and $12 billion annually.[5] Additionally, in 2010, out of the 1,181 hostages taken

worldwide, 1,016, or 86 percent, took place off the Somali coast and out of 53 ships

hijacked same year, 49 ships in which eight sailors were reported killed also took place

off Somali coast.[6] According to the report, Somali pirates currently hold 31 ships and more than 700 crew members hostage.[7]

The GoG is the part of the Atlantic Ocean west of Africa.[8] The region is fast emerging as an important region because of the economic potentials of its landward and maritime domains. However, insecurity in its territorial waters is posing serious hindrances to the actualization of the potentials because the vast resources in the region are being undermined by multifaceted domestic, regional and international threats, and vulnerabilities. Rather than contributing to stability and economic prosperity for countries in the GoG region, pervasive insecurity in the resource-laden maritime environment has resulted in more than $2 billion in annual financial losses, significantly constrained investment and economic prospects, growing crime and adverse political consequences.[9] In 2004, the IMO rated the GoG second only to the Straits of Malacca in number of piracy attacks.[10] The GoG is among the world's richest marine ecosystem, yet its fisheries are among the most weakly protected and are extremely vulnerable to illicit commercial fishing and overfishing. This marine basin is also home to crime syndicates that have successfully stolen large volume of crude oil and other natural resources with a concomitant financial loss to the countries in the region.

The growing threats to maritime security along the coast of Africa compelled the United Nations (UN) to amend its earlier resolution to fight piracy. The amendment called for sterner military action by countries to eradicate piracy. Threats at sea, and piracy were also demarcated through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982). Similarly, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) set outlines for acting against illegal and threatening events at sea, but the threats and

vulnerabilities unfolding along the African coast remain persistent. The situation in Africa reflects a geographical manifestation of rise in maritime insecurity because of lack of conceptual and legal order to deal with threatening events that characterized the Continent's maritime landscape. Africa is the only region in the world that does not have its own maritime policy or strategy despite the acknowledged importance of this component of any national and regional economy. It is only recently that the Africa Union (AU) conceived the idea of an African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS).

That notwithstanding, within the GoG region, there are a number of national and regional initiatives established to maximize the benefits of the economic potential of its maritime domain. These initiatives include the establishment of the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), Gulf of Guinea Guard (GGG) and other multilateral and bilateral engagements amongst the states within the region to enhance security in the GoG maritime domain. Also, Western countries such as Belgium, Britain, France, the United States and others have lent support in terms of manpower development and technical assistance to the region in order to improve the regional capacity to tackle the challenges of maritime insecurity in the region.

Despite these efforts, activities such as illegal fishing, illicit arms and human trafficking, piracy, drug trafficking, illegal bunkering, and many more continue to threaten the maritime domain of the GoG region. To compound this problem, inherent challenges including internal dynamics in the region have continued to hinder efforts at enhancing maritime security in the GoG. All these put together reinforced the quest for continuous review of the situation in order to enhance security in the GoG. The purpose

of the paper is to examine maritime threats and the associated challenges in the GoG, and propose workable solutions aimed at achieving durable security in the region's maritime domain. The paper will examine the geo-strategic dimensions of maritime security in the GoG and the threats to maritime security in the region. Also, regional and global initiatives at ensuring enhanced security in the GoG maritime domain and associated challenges will be discussed after which a strategy to enhance maritime security in the GoG region will be proffered.

Geo-Strategic Dimension of Maritime Security in the GoG

Generally, insecurity in the GoG is a function of the region's vast natural resource endowment, the vulnerabilities inherent in its geographical location, and environmental and demographical factors. Other sources of insecurity in the GoG are the internal and international governance processes and the distinct pressure regional and external geopolitics exerts on the security architecture of the region.

The GoG region encompasses 25 coastal and landlocked countries in West and Central Africa: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.[11] The GoG is formed by the convergence of West, Central and South West coasts covering about 250,000 square nautical miles.[12] The three major rivers in Africa, Rivers Niger, Volta and Congo drain into the Gulf.[13] Within this grouping of English, French, Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries from West and Central Africa, there exists

a wide range of geological, geographical and cultural diversity in the region. The map of

countries in GoG region is in Figure 1.[14]

Figure 1. Map of Countries in GoG Region

The geographical position of the GoG presents a comparative advantage over

other regions of the world. The region borders an important sea lane that shows a

visible connectivity with local energy commodities that is relatively proximate to the

world's main consumers of energy, North America and Western Europe. The region

also benefits from the absence of narrow shipping maritime lanes, known as

chokepoints, which makes oil tankers susceptible to blockades, pirate attacks and

shipping accidents.

The GoG region has a market size of about 300 million consumers generating a gross domestic product of $112 billion, exports of about $4.5 billion and imports of about $13.63 billion.[15] The ecosystem of the region is also a source of global interest.[16] In addition to openness to the Atlantic Ocean, countries of the GoG region enjoy a rich bionetwork made of diverse fauna and flora. These natural riches include, among other endowments, rain forests accounting for much of the oxygen-generating sources of the world.[17] The region's tropical forest belt stretching from Guinea in the west to Cameroon in the east accounts for more than two third of global cocoa needs, while further north, the Savannah and Sahel regions are a major source of cotton, peanuts and shea butter.[18]

The GoG region has large reserves of solid mineral resources such as aluminum, bauxite, coal, cobalt, copper, diamond, gold, iron ore, steel and uranium. The Gulf also habours one of the biggest reserves of oil and gas, thus making it a future source to meet global energy needs.[19] The current political climate in the Middle East and the attendant disruptive effects on price and demand structure of oil is making the world to find solace in the GoG where oil sources are free from offshore political turmoil.[20]

<u>Threats to Maritime Security in the GoG</u>

The potential the geo-strategic location and resources the GoG offers has not been fully exploited due to the existing vulnerabilities in the region. Rather than contributing to the socio-economic growth and development, these vulnerabilities have been sources of insecurity, internal civil crises and international border disputes in the region. Political instability, poor socio-economic conditions, inadequate military capabilities, lack of robust legal system and cultural conflicts that have pervaded the

GoG region since independence gives room for its maritime domain to be negatively exploited. Piracy, transnational crime, environmental degradation, poaching and many other illicit activities continue to threaten the well-being of the GoG maritime domain by taking advantage of the weak security structure in the region. There is also the fear that the GoG region, including its maritime domain, will be threatened in the long run by the effects of the seemingly growing international rivalry over sources of energy between Western countries and emerging Asian economies.

Threats to maritime security in the GoG are unlawful acts perpetrated in the region's maritime domain which have direct negative impacts on nation states within the region. Poaching, piracy, transnational crimes, and environmental degradation, as well as boundary disputes, are some of the visible threats to the GoG maritime domain. These threats adversely impact the socio-economic and political fabrics of most countries within the region.

Poaching. The fishing industry in Africa earns the continent about $10 billion annually through internal trade, global exports and sale of fishing licences to foreign operators. Fisheries are also key elements to food security in the continent.[21] In Senegal for instance, fishing contributes 7 per cent to the GDP, constitutes 33 per cent of exports and 75 per cent of the people's animal protein intake.[22] According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), fish also account for most of the protein intake in most countries: in Ghana, it is 63 per cent and 62 per cent each for Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe.[23] Poaching has, however, continued to threaten this potential in the GoG because of the inability of the states in the region to exercise effective control over their maritime domain. Recent studies suggest that poaching by

vessels from Asia, Europe and other parts of Africa costs the GoG region about $370 million annually.[24] In addition to the financial losses, poaching also has human security costs. Households and individuals are affected directly through reduced availability of seafood in local markets. There is also drastic reduction of incomes and loss of means of livelihood in fishing communities thereby giving rise to criminality.

Piracy. Piracy is the act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act.[25] Piracy impacts human life, the safety of navigation and the environment. It is also a criminal act which does not only affects the victims but also has severe financial repercussions. The GoG, according to IMB ranks as one of the most troubled global waterways because of the weak coastal policing in the region. Between 2002 and 2004, piracy attacks in the GoG exceeded recorded incidents in the rest of the continent with the majority of the attacks resulting in actual boarding of the vessels.[26]

The most notorious part of the GoG is in Nigerian waters where attacks are committed against workers of the oil and gas industry by Niger Delta militant groups, particularly the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). Out of 178 reported cases of attacks between 2003 and 2007, 137 took place in or just off Nigeria. Altogether, about 237 foreigners and dozens of Nigerians were kidnapped in 67 separate incidents in the coastal states of the Delta Region in 2006 and 2007 alone, of these, 98 were foreign sailors or rig workers kidnapped at sea.[27] According to IMB, in 2008 and 2009, a total of 68 piracy incidents, out of which 21 vessels were boarded, three were fired upon and one hijacked, were recorded in Nigerian waters.[28] Forty-four

crew members were also reported injured during the attacks in 2009 which was by far the highest number anywhere in the world. In 2010, 27 piracy incidents were also recorded in Nigerian waters.[29]

Incidents of this nature continue to negatively impact the economy of countries in the GoG region. For instance, maritime analysts estimated that oil companies spend approximately $3.5 billion annually on security to protect their operations in the region.[30] Likewise fishing, which is the region's most significant non-hydrocarbon industry is being devastated by piracy and other violence at sea. Nigeria, for instance, loses about $600 million in export revenue annually from piracy threats to fishing industry alone.[31] Additionally, regional trade and integration, which are critical for economic development in the GoG, is retarded because pirate attacks on shipping have driven up costs as higher insurance premiums are factored in and, ultimately, passed on to consumers.[32]

Transnational Crimes. Transnational crime involves the planning and execution of illicit business ventures by groups or networks of individuals using systematic violence and corruption to achieve their goals in more than one country.[33] Transnational organized crime commonly include money laundering; cyber crime; and trafficking in human; drugs; weapons; endangered species, or nuclear material.[34] The weak security climate in the GoG maritime domain has allowed transnational crime such as illegal bunkering, trafficking in small arms and drugs to thrive in the region with dire economic consequences. For instance, Nigeria lost about $115.4 billion to oil theft between January 2000 and September 2008. A more recent account puts the Nigerian government's loss to illegal bunkering at $7.7 billion daily.[35] This huge loss to illegal

bunkering is an incalculable loss to the country as it reduces government's financial ability to meet people oriented programs.

Criminal gangs responsible for the theft of oil and other mineral resources in the GoG also contribute to the proliferation of small arms in the region as proceeds from their illicit trades fund arms purchases which are mostly smuggled taking advantage of the poorly policed maritime domain. For instance, diamonds and other commodities, such as timber, fueled arms trade and allowed conflicts to continue for decades in the Liberia and Sierra Leone. Another example of illicit arms trafficking in the GoG is the seizure of 13 containers of arms including 120mm, 107mm, 80mm and 60mm mortars and small arms ammunition by Nigerian security agents at the Apapa Sea Port, in Lagos in October 2010.[36] The ensuing culture of violence and lawlessness that is spawned by the proliferation and use of small arms in the GoG region hinders economic, political and social development, and frustrates reconstruction efforts.

Another criminal trend worth noting is the transshipment of narcotics through the GoG. The GoG region is becoming a major narcotics-trafficking hub because drug traffickers increasingly use West African coastal countries as transit point for cocaine from Latin America into Europe, and to lesser extent into North America. A significant amount of high grade cocaine seized between Cape Verde, the Canary Islands and Madeira in Portugal was routed through the GoG in vessels manned by crews from the region.[37] In 2007, an estimated 48 metric tons of cocaine valued at $1.8 billion transited West Africa, comprising some 27 percent of Europe's annual supply. [38] Also, in 2009, several stocks of precursor chemicals were discovered in West Africa, indicating that the region is becoming a hub for stockpiling and refining "base cocaine" into a finished

product.[39] These illegalities were possible because of the vulnerabilities of the GoG region's maritime domain.

   Environmental Degradation. Environmental degradation, mismanagement of marine resources and pollution continue to threaten the marine domain in the GoG region. This is largely due to the failure of some countries in the region to ratify laws and conventions. For instance, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Senegal are yet to ratify the 1990 Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation.[40] Similarly, only 14 countries; out of the 22 member states of the GoG region have ratified the Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) which called for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the region.[41]

   Improper domestic and industrial waste disposal poses a significant threat to both human and marine resources in the GoG region. For instance, in 2006, a Dutch commodities firm, Trafigura, dumped a deadly cocktail of industrial sludge in 14 different locations in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Fifteen people died and over 100,000 others suffered from blistering, headaches, nausea, and abdominal pains.[42] Additionally, due to the mismanagement of fisheries resources in the GoG, there is stock depletion, distorted ecological balance and environmental degradation.[43] Oil spillage in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a source of concern to the oil producing communities who have suffered polluted air and water resources, degraded forests and farm lands, and very high atmospheric temperatures over the years.[44] Unrest among the Ogoni people in the

Niger Delta region of Nigeria is largely due to the destruction of their farmlands and other sea-based livelihood from oil spillage.

Boundary Disputes. The GoG region is faced with unresolved maritime boundaries which have triggered armed conflicts between neigbouring countries with dire consequences for the socio-economic and security situation in the region. In the latter half of the 20th Century, maritime disputes became more numerous because of the increasing competition for scarce resources within the region,[45] particularly, in cases where the disposition of fisheries or valuable undersea resources and displacement of populations are at stake.[46] Maritime boundary disputes in relation to areas rich in oil can, and do, lead to serious international tensions and potential military hostilities; as was the case between Cameroon and Nigerian over oil in the Bakassi Peninsula.

Although, the maritime boundary dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria in the upper half of GoG region has been resolved, there are other disputed maritime boundaries in this part of the region that are not yet resolved. The dispute between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea over an island mouth of Ntem River and the one between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon in the Corisco Bay still lingers with the later being the most contentious in the region. Equatorial Guinea and Gabon have licensed blocs in the disputed waters, but uncertainty has discouraged exploration activities.[47] In the lower half of the region also, there is a dispute between Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo over several offshore deepwater oil reserve blocks. Negotiations are on-going to resolve these disputes, but, they continue to obstruct licensing of large areas of potentially oil rich territory. These disputes, apart from their socio-economic impact on the affected countries, also make it difficult to address shared security

challenges in a collaborative manner amongst the states in the region due to lack of

information sharing resulting from mistrust. This mistrust creates opportunities for

smugglers and other criminals to create seams in the regional security architectures.

Initiatives at Enhancing Maritime Security in the GoG

The strategic importance of the GoG to the global economy necessitates the

need to address the security challenges confronting the region's maritime domain.

Consequently, building the capacity of GoG countries' maritime security forces

continues to be a priority for donor countries. For instance, AFRICOM continues

working with maritime forces and other stakeholders in the region to build capacity

through its Africa Partnership Station (APS) initiative.[48] The African Maritime Law

Enforcement Program (AMLEP), initiated by the US Departments of Homeland Security

and Transportation and the US Coast Guard, helps to build maritime law enforcement

capability to detect and deter illicit activities within the GoG EEZ.[49] The Belgian

Government is also training DRC maritime forces while the British and French forces

maintain some forms of presence in parts of the GoG maritime domain in collaboration

with navies of Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Similarly, the UN, and other world bodies also initiated different program of action

at various times to address maritime security and other related matters in the region.

For instance, the IMO, in conjunction with the MOWCA, established a Sub-regional

Integrated Coast Guard Network (SICGN) for West and Central Africa to combat

maritime security challenges in the GoG region.[50] SICGN is aimed at reinforcing

cooperation between member states in the face of mounting problems of piracy, armed

robbery and other illicit acts against ships (SUA Convention).[51] It is also to combat

13

illegal immigration, terrorism and marine pollution (MARPOL) and illegal exploitation of the resources of the EEZ of member states as well as protecting the marine environment.[52] Additionally, the SICGN is to enforce the UN Conventions on Maritime Security and Safety (SOLAS and ISPS Code), Search and Rescue (SAR Convention) and Convention on the Law of Sea.[53]

The AU is taking steps to improve governance along Africa's coastlines. Currently, the Union is developing a long-term maritime strategy that will articulate a multilayered, long-term common vision and comprehensively address aspects relating to maritime security and safety. [54] The strategy will also focus on wealth creation from sustainable governance of Africa's seas and oceans.[55] The object of the AIMS is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of existing and potential challenges and where resources will be allocated based on identified priorities.[56] The strategy is also aimed at designing a comprehensive, concerted, coherent and coordinated approach that improves maritime conditions in respect of environmental and socio-economic development.[57]

Furthermore, Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria established the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy (GGESS) to ensure security of energy supply in the GoG region.[58] The GGESS has built strong partnerships with a number of foreign governments like the UK and the US to cooperate in a co-ordinated manner to stamp out oil theft, illegal small arms trafficking, money laundering and other maritime threats within the GoG region.[59] Though these initiatives are wide-ranging, they are generally uncoordinated and may result in conflict of interests, duplication of efforts and undue rivalry amongst the various stakeholders in the long run.

Challenges Confronting Maritime Security in the GoG

The various initiatives to ensure maritime security in the GoG notwithstanding, the threats to the region's marine domain still persists due to certain challenges borne out of the political and socio-economic dynamics inherent in the region. Some of the challenges militating against maritime security in the GOG include the uncoordinated nature of the various initiatives designed to combat insecurity in the region, lack of maritime domain awareness, lack of robust legislative and judicial arrangements to deal with the transnational natures of the issues and inadequate response capabilities.

Uncoordinated International and Regional Initiatives. The uncoordinated nature of the international and regional initiatives is a challenge to combating insecurity in the GoG marine domain. Although there is no evidence of competition for resources or attention among the various stakeholders, they will be more effective if they are coordinated and their efforts synergized rather than in piecemeal the way they are presently. Similarly, military assistance to countries in the GoG is not focused. This is because Excess Defence Assets (EDA), training capacity and other forms of assistance donated do not specifically meet the GoG countries' urgent needs to ensure maritime security. [60] For instance, out of the 6,456 pieces of equipment (predominantly firearms and ammunition) the U.S gave to Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal for the past 20 years; only 8 items are related directly to maritime security.[61] The equipment received are old, in poor condition and are not the type of assets which the countries have the training to use or the resources to maintain.[62] An integrated demand-based approach, in which equipment needs of the GoG countries are identified, prioritized and resourced

by the international community in collaboration with the GoG regional and national authorities need to be adopted.

Lack of Maritime Domain Awareness. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is the effective understanding of anything associated with the global maritime domain that could impact the security of a nation state or region.[63] MDA is achieved through close and continual cooperation amongst international organizations and improved ability to collect, fuse, analyze, display, and disseminate actionable information to maritime security operators.[64] Lack of MDA in the GoG is a function of geographic blindness within the region due to limited and non-existence of radar satellite. Basic equipment, such as functioning surveillance systems and other materials including patrol craft and trained personnel, are rarely available within the GoG region.[65] In countries where little of this equipment is available, it is not seaworthy due to lack of maintenance due largely to the absence of technical know-how to operate and maintain the equipment.[66] Poor intelligence sharing amongst countries in the region due to mistrust resulting from border disputes also impact negatively on MDA in the GoG.[67] The implication of this is the unnoticed high volume of illicit traffic and activities in the region's territorial waters.

Improving MDA in the GoG requires collaborative efforts by international stakeholders to install radar satellite to cover the region's maritime domain as appropriate while regional authorizes sternly address the issue of intelligence sharing amongst the countries. Acquisition, maintenance and operation of required surveillance equipment can be funded through escrow accounts to be established by international stakeholders, regional and national authorities. Additionally, existing regional maritime structure must be empowered to coordinate all maritime intelligence related functions in

the region while steps are taken by relevant global and regional authorities to resolve lingering disputes in order to promote trust and enhance information sharing among member nations.

Lack of Robust Legislative and Judicial Arrangements. Although, countries in the GoG region are signatories to most international conventions, very few of them have actually ratified and institutionalized these protocols domestically.[68] The previously mentioned disputes among GoG nations over territorial claims and EEZ boundaries impedes the regional cooperation and partnership necessary to serve common interests and objectives, not only in policing and emergency response but throughout the chain of rule of law including investigation, prosecution, adjudication and correction.[69] The absence of a sub-regional pact on the right of hot pursuit is also a significant impediment to emergency response.[70] Furthermore, conflicting maritime laws and regulations adds to the difficulty in addressing the security needs of the GoG maritime domain.

The inability of the various UN Statues to clearly define the jurisdiction of maritime offences contributes to the impunity with which maritime crimes are committed by international perpetrators in the GoG. Except there are concerted efforts by the UN to resolve the issue of jurisdiction while regional and national authorities within the GoG region take steps to ratify and harmonize existing maritime laws, the marine domain will remain threatened by all sorts of criminality.

Inadequate Response Capabilities. One of the challenges confronting maritime security in the GoG is the inadequate response capabilities of maritime forces in the region. Historically African security authorities and institutions have focused mainly on

land-based, internal and transboundary threats.[71] Accordingly, national armies receive the lion's share of security funding, resources, and policy attention.[72] The resultant effect of these factors is unavailability of required platforms and capable personnel to guaranty security in the GoG maritime domain.

The three largest naval forces in the region, the DRC, Nigerian and Ghanaian Navies with 6,703, 8,000 and 2,000 personnel respectively have platforms with very limited maritime reconnaissance capability.[73] They also do not possess surveillance and interception capabilities beyond 100 nautical miles of the vast coastline.[74] The other countries within the region have very small naval forces and coastguards primarily constituted and equipped for port security and inshore patrol duties. The implication is that these navies cannot effectively enforce maritime regulations within the UN approved 200 nautical miles EEZ. See Table 1 for the capabilities of some navies within the GoG region.[75]

Serial	Countries	Personnel	Platforms
1.	Angola	1,000	4 x Mandume, 3 x Patrulheirot, 2 x Namacurra and 1 x SS-C
2.	Benin	200	2 x PB (Matelot Brice Kpomasse)
3.	Cameroon	1,300	2 x PCO, 1 x PCI, 2 x PCR and 6 x PB
4.	Cape Verde	100	1 x PCC and 2 x PCI
5.	Congo	800	3 x PFI and several river boats
6.	Cote d'Ivoire	900	1 x PCC, 2 x PBR and 2 x LCM
7.	DRC	6,703	1 x PFC and 2 x PCI
8.	Gabon	500	1 x PFM, 2 x PCO (FR P-400), 6 x PB and 1 x LST
9.	Gambia	70	3 x PCI
10.	Ghana	2,000	2 x PFC, 4 X PCO AND 1 X PBI
11.	Guinea	400	2 x PCI
12.	Nigeria	8,000	1 x FFG, 1 x Corvette, 1 x PFM, 4 x PCO, 1 x PCC, 15 x PBF, 2 x MCC, 1 x LST and 5 x Logistics and Support vessels.

Table 1. Capabilities of Some Navies in the GoG Region

These inadequacies have rendered the GoG vulnerable to the various forms of criminal activities being witnessed in the region's maritime domain. To effectively combat maritime threats within the GoG, naval capabilities of the countries bordering the Gulf must be improved upon through the urgent acquisition of surveillance and interception capabilities focused on the effective policing of the maritime domain. Another alternative is to equip the SICGN with appropriate surveillance and interception equipment and platforms to patrol the international waters in the GoG.

Strategy to Enhance Maritime Security in the GoG

The expansiveness of the GoG coupled with the geo-dynamics of the region requires collaborative regional and international efforts aimed at addressing the inherent challenges confronting maritime security in the region. These efforts can be leveraged on existing regional maritime security structure such as MOWCA to avoid duplication, undue rivalry and conflict of interests which often result from multiple and uncoordinated efforts. The approach will also ensure careful identification and prioritization of the region's maritime security requirements and effective application of same to achieve a desired effect.

MOWCA is a 25-nation regional maritime organization established in 1975 for amongst other functions, to ensure and promote maritime safety and security in the GoG region. The objective of MOWCA is to serve the regional and international community as a one-stop shop for handling all maritime matters that are regional in character. The outfit has a 13-member states coast guard network with limited capacity to interdict maritime threats. It also has an information and communication centre (ICC), ensuring the effective flow of information between members and the control and

19

inspection of ships. MOWCA has a financial base to fund its activities and 3 academic institutions to train required human capacity for its functions and responsibilities.

MOWCA has the structure on ground which could be empowered to deal with maritime threats and challenges within the GoG by taking advantage of its large membership which cut across the entire GoG region. MOWCA's MDA capability can be enhanced by installing relevant surveillance equipment including intelligence and communication gadgets and incident-reporting and tracking database in the ICC across the region. Satellite radars can be installed at critical points within the region's maritime domain to enhance MOWCA intelligence gathering capability. International experts can also be brought in to assist MOWCA to conduct intelligence estimate of the GoG to gain better understanding of the threats, trends and dynamics at play in the region. MOWCA's human intelligence capabilities can also be improved upon taking advantage of the collaboration between international stakeholders and regional authorities to gain access and establish cordial relationship with experts and Non-Governmental Organizations working in the region. In order to improve information sharing in the GoG region, the UN and other international and regional organizations must take broad-base steps to address and settle lingering border disputes believed to be the sources of the perceived mistrust amongst member states of the region.

The financial base of MOWCA can be expanded to include contributions from countries and private sectors including oil and tanker industries that possess significant equities and greater interest in the security of the region. International donor countries can also be encouraged to make financial contributions directly to MOWCA rather than in piecemeal to individual countries as it is the case presently. Though, MOWCA does

not have a legal structure, a department can be established and empowered to adjudicate maritime cases and related matters within the GoG region. This department, if established can review and amend existing protocols and conventions to suit the peculiarities of the region. It can also be empowered to investigate and prosecute all maritime offences committed within the EEZ and territorial waters within the GoG, and when necessary interfere in cases handled by countries where there is evidence of complacency.

The remaining 23 member states who have not signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the coast guard network can be encouraged to do so in order to strengthen the network and ensure its efficiency. Necessary platforms based on identified and prioritized requirements of the coast guard can be procured via the escrow system to enable it function effectively. Existing MOWCA training institutions can also be improved upon and staffed with relevant foreign experts from donor countries to develop capable human resource for the organization.

Empowering MOWCA will create room for collaborative, coordinated, synergized and focused international and regional efforts to combat maritime threats in the GoG. It will also create room for military assistance in terms of EDA and training to be identified, prioritized and consolidated to meet the required capacity and capability to deal with the security challenges in the GoG marine domain. Additionally, leveraging regional and international initiatives on MOWCA will promote intelligence acquisition, help to build trust amongst member states and encourage information sharing, thereby enhancing MDA in the region. Furthermore, empowering MOWCA will eliminate duplication of

efforts, undue rivalry and conflict of interests and reflect genuine efforts to help Africans to solve their problems.

Conclusion

The GoG is rich in natural resources including oil and gas, and vast solid minerals. The ecosystem of the region is a source of global interest because it enjoys a rich bionetwork made of fauna and flora, while the rain forest accounts for much of the oxygen-generating sources of the world. The GoG borders an important sea lane that shows visible connectivity with local energy community and proximity to world's main consumer of energy. Additionally, the GoG is free from checkpoints which make oil tankers susceptible to blockades, pirate attacks and shipping accident.

Despite the riches and the advantage its geographical location offers, the GoG continued to be threatened by piracy, poaching, transnational crime, boundary disputes and environmental degradation with dire consequences on the socio-economic situation of the region. Uncoordinated international and regional initiatives, lack of situational awareness and response capabilities and lack of robust legislative and judicial arrangements have remained serious challenges militating against measures employed to guaranty security in the GoG marine domain.

Enhancing maritime security in the GoG region requires the international community and regional authorities to adopt a collaborative integrated demand-based approach where the region's maritime security requirements are carefully identified, prioritized and resourced to deal with the threats. Empowering MOWCA is the most efficient way to establish this framework. Through this approach, relevant platforms and surveillance equipment will be provided to enhance situational awareness and response

capabilities within the region. MOWCA will also have the required capital base to finance its activities. Additionally, the approach will guaranty robust legislative and judicial arrangements to deal with maritime security matters peculiar to the GoG region. This collaborative integrated demand-based approach will eliminate duplication of efforts, undue rivalry and conflict of interests while reflecting genuine efforts to help Africans to solve their problems.

Endnotes

[1] The Brenthrust Foundation, Discussion Paper 2010/03, "Maritime Development in Africa, An Independent Specialists' Framework", www.thebrenthrustsfoundation.org , (accessed October 18, 2010).

[2] Freedom C. Onuoha, Sea Piracy and Maritime Security in the Horn of Africa: The Somalia Coast and Gulf of Aden in Perspective, African Security Review, 2154-0128, Volume 18, no. 3, 34, http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ftinterface~content=9924685725~fulltext=713240930~frm=content, (accessed November 10, 2010).

[3] Ibid.

[4] BBC Mobile, News Africa 18 January 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12214905, (accessed March 2, 2011).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Gulf of Guinea, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf-of-Guinea, (accessed September 11, 2010).

[9] Raymond Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, Strategic Insight, Volume VI, no. 1 (January 2007), http:www.nps.edu/Academic/enters/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2007/Jan/gilpinJan07.html, (accessed November 10, 2010).

[10] James J. F. Forest, Matthew V. Sousa, Oil and Terrorism in the New Gulf: Framing U.S Security and Energy Policies for the Gulf Guinea, Lexington Books, 116, http://books.google.com/books?id=8C3Wt6CFVWIC&dq=Gulf+of+Guinea+and+Straits+of+Malacca&source=gbs_navlinks_s, (accessed November 10, 2010).

[11] MOWCA Brochure, http://www.mowca.org/new%20design/mowca.pdf (accessed November 11, 2010).

[12] Ezeoba D.J, Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea Commission: Challenges for the Nigerian Navy, Unpublished Research Paper, National War College (Nigeria), Abuja, 26.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Gulf of Guinea.

[15] Domian Ondo Mane, Emergence of the Gulf of Guinea in the Global Economy: Prospects and Challenges, IMF Working Paper, December 2005 (WP/05/235), 3, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=888104##, (accessed October 18, 2010).

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Abdel-Fatau Musah, West Africa: Governance and Security in a Changing Region, Africa Program Working Paper Series, International Peace Institute, (February 2009), 2, http://www.ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/west_africa.pdf, (accessed October 18, 2010).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Mane, Emergence of the Gulf of Guinea, 5.

[21] The Brenthrust Foundation, Discussion Paper 2010/03, "Maritime Development in Africa, 19.

[22] Ibid., 20.

[23] Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Francois Very, Bad Order at Sea: From the Gulf of Aden to the Gulf of Guinea, African Security Review, 2154-0128, Volume 18, Issue 3, Page 19, http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ftinterface~content=9924685725~fulltext=713240930~frm=content, (accessed November 10, 2010).

[26] Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf.

[27] Arild Nodland, Guns, Oil, and "Cake" Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Newport Papers 35, 191, http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/USNWC_Newport35_PiracyAndMaritimeCrime.pdf, accessed November 27, 2010).

[28] ASI Global Maritime Response, 4, http://www.asiglobalresponse.com/downloads/piracy_report.pdf, (accessed February 3, 2011).

[29] Nigeria: The Country Risks Tougher Measures as Piracy Cost Shipping US$12bn, http://allafrica.com/stories/201101210887.html, (accessed February 3, 2011).

[30] Monique Theron, Pirates in West Africa: Organized Crime at Sea, http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=comcontent&view=article&id=299&Itemid=201, (accessed September 19, 2010).

[31] Peter J. Pham, PhD, Africa's Other Dangerous Waters: Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, (2009), http://www.worlddefensereview.com/pham120309.shtml, (accessed September 19, 2010).

[32] Ibid.

[33] National Institute of Justice, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/crime/transnational-organized-crime/welcome.htm, (accessed November 28, 2010).

[34] Ibid.

[35] Dauda .S. Garuba, Trans-Border Economic Crimes, Illegal Oil Bunkering and Economic Reforms in Nigeria, Global Consortium on Security Transformation, Policy Brief Series, no. 15, (October 2010), http://www.securitytransformation.org/images/publicaciones/185_Policy_Brief_15_-_Trans-Border_Economic_Crimes,_Illegal_Oil_Bunkering_and_Economic_Reforms_in_Nigeria.pdf, (accessed November 28, 2010).

[36] Evidence Iran is behind Seized Arms Cargo, Ya Libnan Publication of November 16, 2010, http://www.yalibnan.com/2010/11/16/evidence-iran-is-behind-seized-arms-cargo/, (accessed February 26, 2011).

[37] Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, Strategic Insight, Volume VI, Issue 1 (January 2007), http:www.nps.edu/Academic/enters/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2007/Jan/gilpinJan07.html, (accessed November 10. 2010).

[38] Andre Le Sage, Non-state Security Threats in Africa: Challenges for U.S. Engagement, PRISM 2, no. 1, (December 2010), http//www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/prism2-1/Prism57-78_LeSage.pdf, (accessed November 28, 2010).

[39] Ibid

[40] IMO/IPIECA, Global Initiative in Africa and Beyond, http://www.ingenieroambiental.com/4030/gi_africa.pdf, (accessed February 26, 2011).

[41] United Nations Environmental Programme, Environment for Development (Abidjan Convention), http://www.unep.org/abidjanconvention/, (accessed February 26, 2011).

[42] Barry Mason, Toxic Waste Dumping in Ivory Coast, World Socialist Web Site, ICFI, October 24, 2006, http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/oct2006/ivor-o24.shtml, (accessed November 29, 2010).

[43] Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf.

[44] Odjuvwuederhie Emmanuel Inoni, Douglason Gordon Omotor, Felicia Nkem Adun, The Effect Of Oil Spillage On Crop Yield And Farm Income In Delta State, Nigeria, http://www.agr.hr/jcea/issues/jcea7-1/pdf/jcea71-6.pdf, (accessed February 3, 2011).

[45] Elizabeth A. Nyam and Paul R. Hensel, Implications of Issue Salience for Territorial, Maritime and River Claims, 5, http://www.paulhensel.org/Research/apsa08.pdf, (accessed November 29, 2010).

[46] David. L. Goldwyn and J. Stephen Morrison, A Strategic U.S Approach to Governance and Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Report of the CSIS Task Force on Gulf of Guinea Security, 18, http://allafrica.com/peaceafrica/resources/view/00010701.pdf, (accessed February 26, 2011).

[47] Ibid.

[48] Africa Partnership Station U.S. Africa Command Fact Sheet, http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp?pdfID=20091019122718, (accessed October 20, 2010).

[49] Williams E. Ward and Thomas P. Galvin, "Africa's Future is up to Africans" Putting the President's Words into Action, JFQ, no. 58, (3rd Quarter 2010), 12, http://www.intelros.ru/pdf/JFQ/58/3.pdf, (accessed October 20, 2010).

[50] MOWCA, Implementation of Sub-regional Integrated Coast Guard Network, http://www.mowca.org/new%20design/coast-guard.html, (accessed October 20, 2010).

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ramtane Lamamra, Speech Delivered on Maritime Security and Safety at the 242th Meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, Addis Ababa, October 4, 2010, http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2010/october/situationroom/Brief%20of%20the%20CPS%20_2_.pdf, (accessed February 3, 2011).

[55] Ibid.

[56] Improving Maritime Security and Safety in Africa, AU Sponsor Wire, October 7, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201010070413.html, (accessed November 20, 2010).

[57]Ibid.

[58] Alexander's Oil & Gas Connections, News & Trends in Africa, Volume 11, no. 8, (September 27, 2006), http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/nta63973.htm, (accessed November 17, 2010).

[59] Ibid.

[60] John Raidt and Kristen E. Smith, Advancing U.S., Africa, and Global Interests: Security and Stability in the West African Maritime Domain, The Michael S, Ansari Africa Centre and the On the Horizon Project, Atlantic Council, November 30, 2010, 37, *http://*www.acus.org/.../advancing-us-african-and-global-interests-security-and- stability-west-african-maritime-domain, (accessed December 16, 2010).

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness for the National Strategy for Maritime Security, (October 2005), http://www.virginia.edu/colp/pdf/NSMS-National-Plan-to-Achieve-Maritime-Domain-Awareness.pdf, (accessed December 12, 2010).

[64] Ibid.

[65] Gilpin, Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Raidt and Smith, Advancing U.S., Africa, and Global Interests, 30.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 28.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, The Military Balance 2009, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 288 – 323.

[74] Ezeoba, Nigeria and the Gulf.

[75] Taylor and Group, The Military Balance 2009.